

every 50 yards, for what? For what? I don't think they know what for, and neither do I.

Now the assault that took place on our democracy on January 6 was a dark day for our country, no doubt. I will remember that for the rest of my life. But the Members of Congress did something really important that same day. We reconvened right here in the U.S. Senate, even amid some of the broken glass and smashed doors in the House. We finished our constitutional duty to count the electoral college votes. The rioters that day—who should be prosecuted—did not win. That was important.

But that was 3 months ago, and our Nation's Capitol is still decked in layer upon layer of barbed wire and metal fencing. More than 5,000 troops still roam the Capitol instead of being where they know they should be: home with their families, back to their jobs—these are National Guard members, so their work is obviously being disrupted—and back to their States and their communities.

The cost of keeping them here since January at this juncture is over a half billion dollars. But here's the thing: I pay close attention to these issues. I keep asking: OK, I understand this; they were here after the 6th, and they were here for the inauguration, but what is the threat now? Give me an intel threat—a credible intel threat—that requires 5,000 troops and razor wire all across the U.S. Capitol, the people's house. What is the credible intel? I have not gotten any credible intel that I am aware of.

We learned yesterday that the Secretary of Defense approved the request for these soldiers to be here for another 60 days. Here is what you didn't hear about in those reports. I have a lot of respect for the Secretary of Defense. As a matter of fact, as I mentioned in my remarks earlier, I introduced him at his confirmation hearing. But this decision on whether there should be troops here or not is actually not his decision. It is our decision. It is the Members of Congress's decision. That is the threshold issue: Should we still

have the troops here? It is the majority leader's decision. It is the Speaker of the House's decision. So why do we still have troops here? Why is the Capitol still in high security lockdown?

I think it would be really important for the majority leader to come to the floor and not only tell us but tell the troops, tell the American people what is going on.

Remember, this is not our House. This is not our building. This belongs to the people of America. We are privileged to be here, certainly, but we need answers.

And I will tell you who else needs answers. The troops need answers.

My own view is we need to get these troops home. We need to tear down the wall. We need to open the gate. And this is not just my view; this is a widely held view. Democrats and Republicans all agree.

Just look around the Capitol Hill neighborhoods. These signs are everywhere. So are other signs. "Free the People's House." "Don't Fence the Capitol."

What is happening right now—we all love our military. Our military normally is a symbol of strength for America. But right now, the military here is not a symbol of strength. We are telling the world, through razor wire, that American democracy is fragile and that it is afraid. American democracy is not fragile, and it is not afraid. So these troops are a symbol not just to Americans but to the rest of the world that the Capitol lives in fear or weakness.

There was evidently some kind of vague—it wasn't credible—threat on March 4 from some nutjob group, QAnon—however the heck you pronounce it—and we had the entire House on the other side of this great building call it quits, went home, and said: We are not going to do any work. That is exactly the wrong answer. That is not what we did on January 6.

So what we need is we need our leaders in the House and in the Senate to come down here and tell us why we are still in an armed camp. One can't help but wonder if there is something else

going on here. Why do the leaders of the House and Senate still want thousands of troops and razor wire around the Capitol? I hope they don't fear the people they represent. I don't fear my constituents. Is there intel that they have that we don't know about? How long can we expect this green zone in our Nation's Capital to continue? The American people need answers.

But here is the key issue. At the end of the day, this is a law enforcement problem. It is not a military problem. To make it a military problem is dangerous. If the Capitol Police need more officers, then let's have that discussion, but we are a citizen-controlled government, and our military, whom I respect so much, should not be used for an extended period of time here on the Capitol grounds to handle a law enforcement issue, especially at the most important symbol of democracy in America, probably the most important symbol of democracy in the world.

So here is what we need to do. It is time to tear these walls down, open these gates, and send our brave National Guard troops home.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10:30 a.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:03 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, March 11, 2021, at 10:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 10, 2021:

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN
DEVELOPMENT

MARCIA LOUISE FUDGE, OF OHIO, TO BE SECRETARY OF
HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

MICHAEL STANLEY REGAN, OF NORTH CAROLINA, TO
BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

MERRICK BRIAN GARLAND, OF MARYLAND, TO BE ATTORNEY GENERAL.